

88301-737-7/\$1.95

CHARLES DICKENS

A Christmas Carol

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A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens



Academic Industries, Inc.

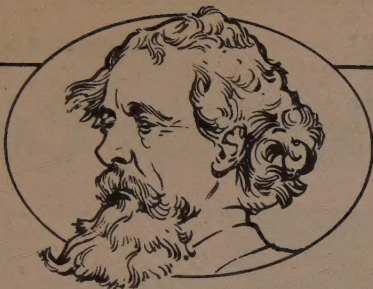
West Haven, Connecticut 06516

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ISBN 0-88301-737-7

Published by
Academic Industries, Inc.
The Academic Building
Saw Mill Road
West Haven, Connecticut 06516

Printed in the United States of America



about the author

The most popular, and perhaps the greatest of English novelists was Charles Dickens. Born in 1812, Dickens was the son of a clerk in the Navy-Pay office.

Although from a poor background, Dickens was both ambitious and industrious. His education came from books, those in school as well as his own. He wrote of people as he saw them and created some of the most timeless characters in literature.

The turning point in his life came at the time of his marriage. Both his wedding day and his first publication occurred in the same year. From that time, he continued to write many novels during the conventional Victorian era.

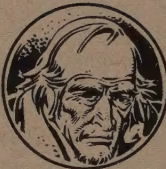
He died in 1870.

Charles Dickens

A Christmas Carol



Fred



Ebenezer
Scrooge



the ghost of
Jacob Marley



Tiny Tim
Bob Cratchit



I am the Spirit of
CHRISTMAS PAST!
I show what has
been.



I am the Spirit of
CHRISTMAS
PRESENT!
I show what is now.



I am the Spirit of
CHRISTMAS
FUTURE!
I show what
could be.

A Christmas Carol

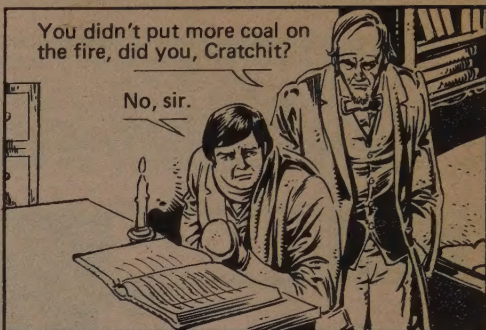
Ebenezer Scrooge and Jacob Marley had been business partners for years. However, when our story opens on this cold Christmas Eve in eighteenth-century London, Jacob Marley had been dead for the last seven. Since money had always been the most important thing in the world to them, the sign outside the office still read Scrooge and Marley. It would have cost Scrooge money to have Marley's name painted out!



In the story the ghost of Scrooge's dead partner, Jacob Marley, visits him. Marley's ghost promises Scrooge that, for his own good, he will have three other ghostly visitors. They help Scrooge to see what he has become: a man without love or friends. But most important of all, Scrooge is left with the chance to change his future.

POCKET CLASSICS

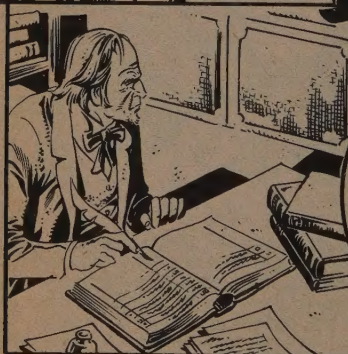
Although the hour was late, Scrooge and his clerk, Bob Cratchit, were still at work in the chilly, dark office. Outside, people rushed by on last-minute Christmas errands. None of them were too cold or too hurried to wish the others a Merry Christmas! It seemed warmer outside than it was in Scrooge's office.



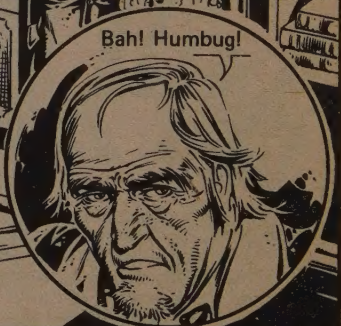
Good! And keep your eye off that clock, too!



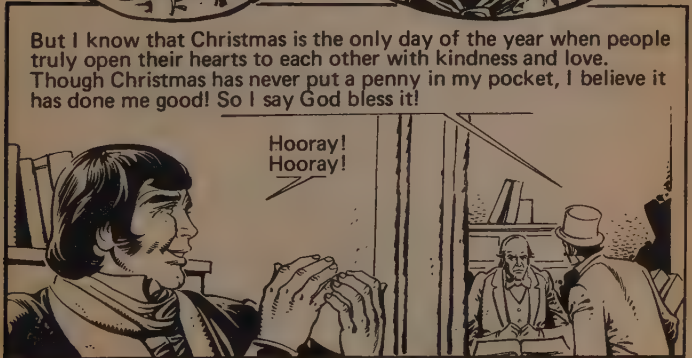
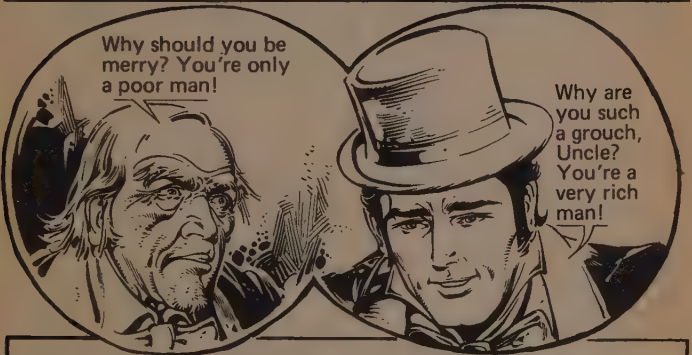
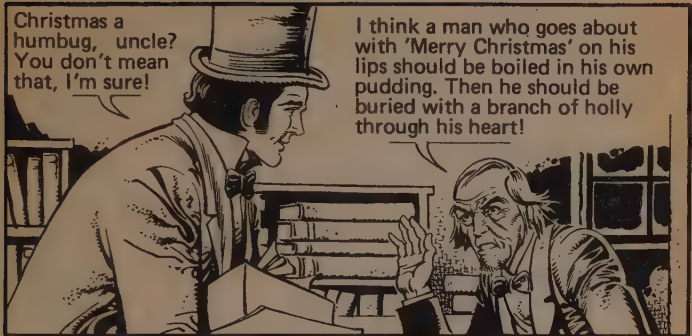
A little later, as Scrooge sat at his desk, counting coins, a young man appeared in the doorway. It was his nephew, Fred.



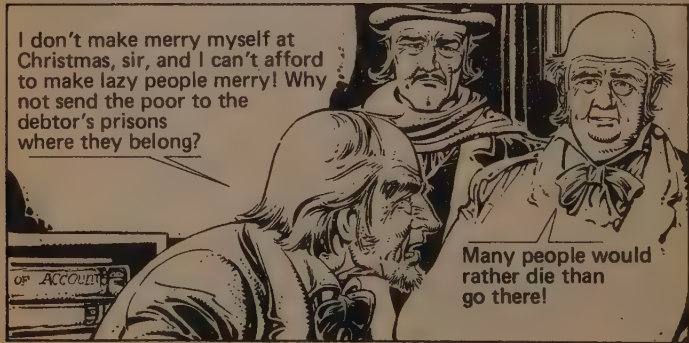
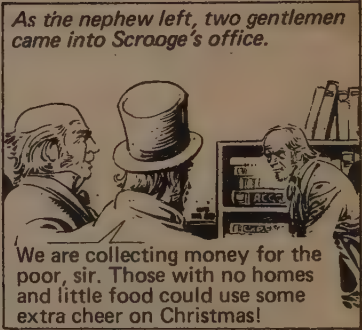
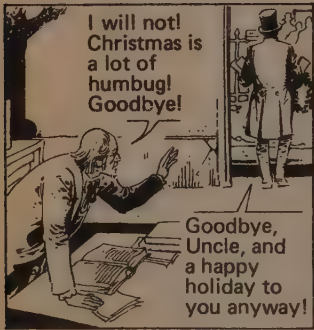
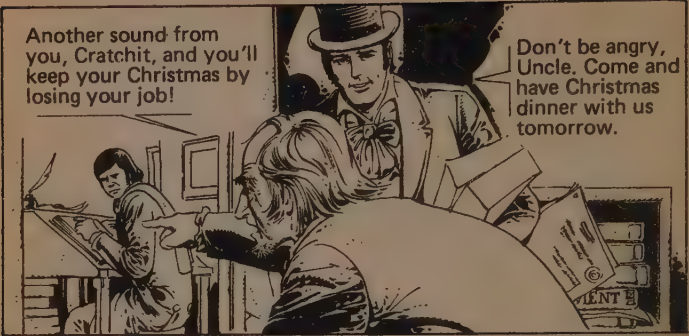
Bah! Humbug!



A Christmas Carol



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A Christmas Carol

If they would rather die,
then let them do so. I say
there are too many people
in the world as it is!



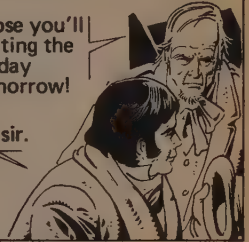
A merry Christmas
to you anyway, sir!

*Since there was nothing more
they could say, the two gentlemen left.*

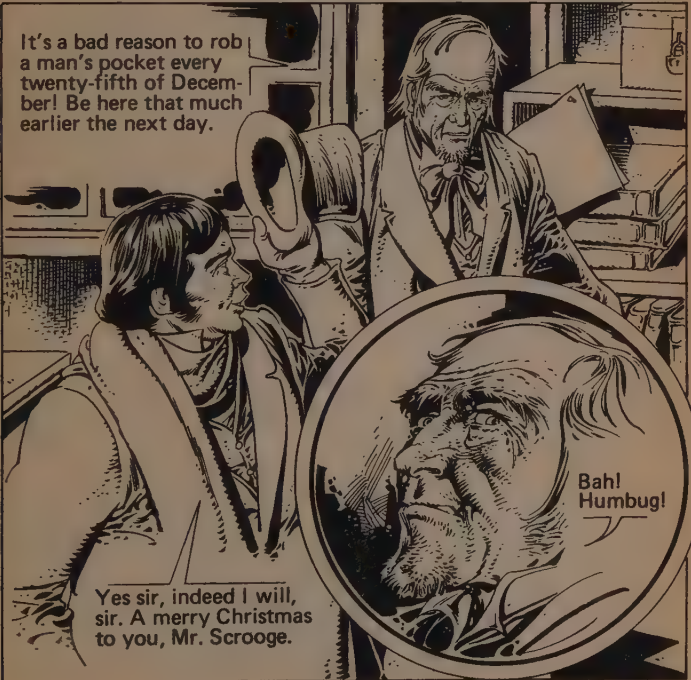
*At last it was time for Bob
Cratchit to blow out his candle
and put on his hat. It was time
to close the office.*

I suppose you'll
be wanting the
whole day
off tomorrow!

Y-yes, sir.



It's a bad reason to rob
a man's pocket every
twenty-fifth of Decem-
ber! Be here that much
earlier the next day.



Yes sir, indeed I will,
sir. A merry Christmas
to you, Mr. Scrooge.

Bah!
Humbug!

POCKET CLASSICS

After a lonely supper at a near-by shop, Scrooge started home. He lived alone in the same rooms that had once been the home of his partner, Jacob Marley.



He made his way through the dark streets until he reached the front door of an old building. As he reached to unlock it, the door knocker before him seemed to glow. Then it changed, and Marley's face appeared in its place!



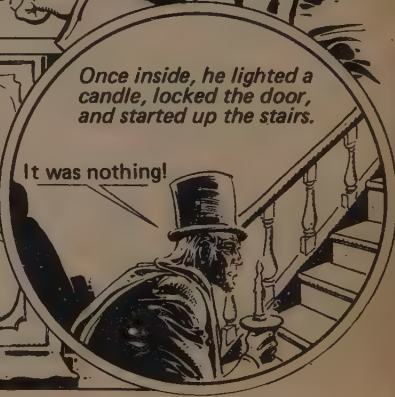
As Scrooge stood watching, the face faded. Soon only the heavy iron knocker remained.

I couldn't have seen Marley's face. My mind must be playing tricks on me tonight!



Once inside, he lighted a candle, locked the door, and started up the stairs.

It was nothing!



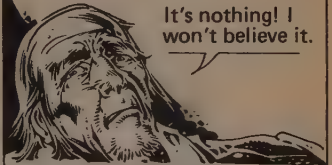
When he reached his rooms, Scrooge put on his robe and night cap and sat by his fireplace to sip a warm drink.



As he sat there, a small bell in the room began to ring. It started softly, then grew louder and louder. Other bells in the house began to ring as well.



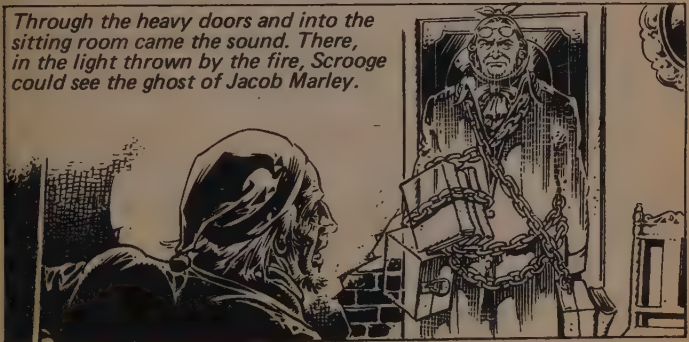
Suddenly the bells stopped, and a new sound began.



It's nothing! I won't believe it.

But he had heard the clanking of chains! They were coming up the stairs and toward his room!

Through the heavy doors and into the sitting room came the sound. There, in the light thrown by the fire, Scrooge could see the ghost of Jacob Marley.



Scrooge was surprised to see the ghost, but not so frightened that he was afraid to ask questions.

Who are you?

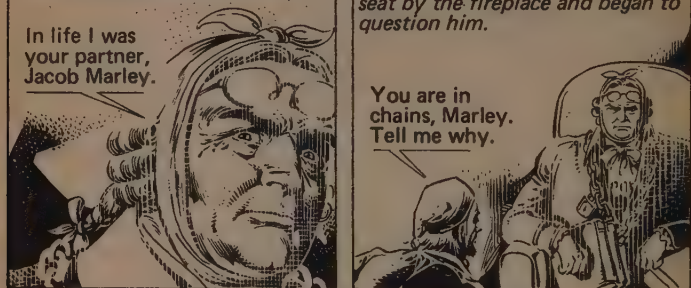


And the hollow answer came . . .

In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

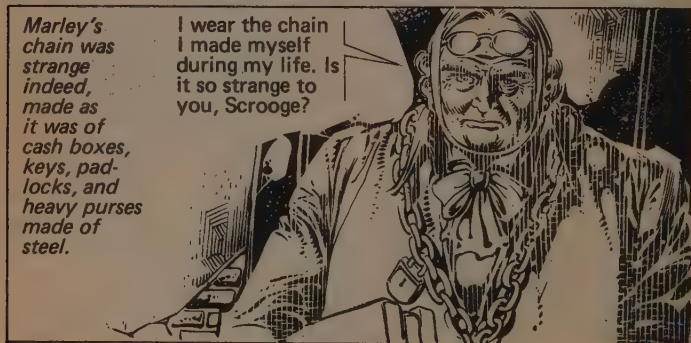
Scrooge offered Marley's ghost a seat by the fireplace and began to question him.

You are in chains, Marley. Tell me why.



Marley's chain was strange indeed, made as it was of cash boxes, keys, padlocks, and heavy purses made of steel.

I wear the chain I made myself during my life. Is it so strange to you, Scrooge?



You have such a chain yourself . . . yours is far heavier than mine by now.

I don't understand. You were always a good man of business, Jacob.

At those words the spirit let out a fearful cry and shook his chains.

Now I must walk the earth and see the things I might have done while I was alive. And the same thing will happen to you, Ebenezer!

Business! I never knew what my business truly was. People were my business! Charity and kindness were my business! But I thought only of money!

POCKET CLASSICS

At this, Scrooge grew very much afraid, and he fell on his knees.



Is there no hope for me, Jacob?

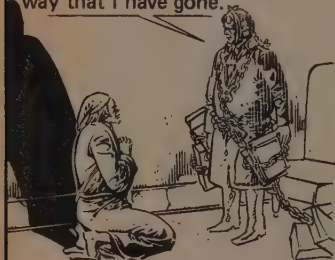
There is! That is why I am here. Listen closely! My time is almost gone.



I'm listening, Jacob. But don't be too hard on me.



I don't know how I stand before you now in a shape that you can see. I have spent many days sitting beside you, and you have not seen me. But tonight I am here to warn you that you do not have to follow the way that I have gone.



You will be visited by three spirits. The first will come tomorrow when the clock strikes one. The second will come the next night at the same hour. The third will arrive the next night after the last stroke of twelve. You will see me no more, but remember what has passed between us.



A Christmas Carol

Marley finished what he was saying and floated backward through the window into the night. Scrooge looked out after him and saw other figures in the air, all in chains like Marley's ghost. Many had been known to Scrooge during their lifetimes.



*All of a sudden the spirits and their voices faded away.
The night became as silent as it had been before.*

*Full of strange thoughts,
Scrooge went straight to bed
without undressing. He fell
asleep right away.*



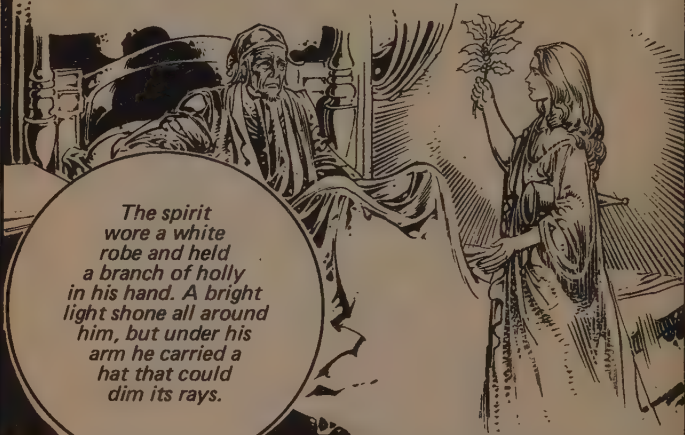
*Something woke him up as the
hour bell rang . . . a deep, dull
sound.*



POCKET CLASSICS

Lights suddenly flashed and the curtains of Scrooge's bed were pulled back. He sat up quickly and found himself face to face with an unearthly visitor.

It was a strange figure—like a child, yet also like an old man. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white, yet the face had not a wrinkle upon it. The arms were long and the hands looked very strong.



The spirit wore a white robe and held a branch of holly in his hand. A bright light shone all around him, but under his arm he carried a hat that could dim its rays.

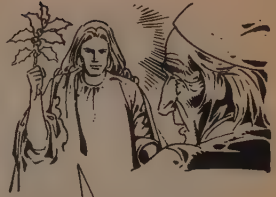
Are you the spirit, sir, whose coming was told to me?

Yes. I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

A Christmas Carol

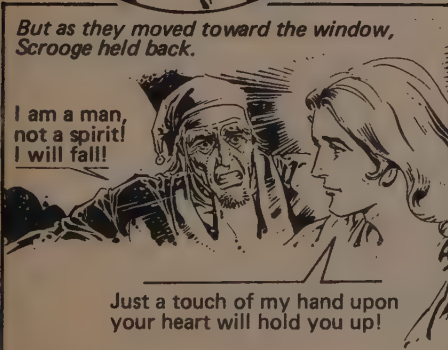
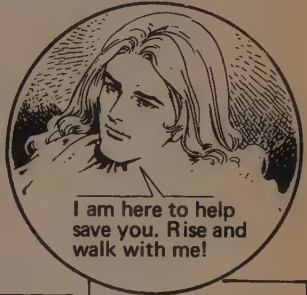


Scrooge wanted very much to see the spirit with his hat on. He begged him to wear it.



What! Would you so soon put out the light I have to give? It is people like you whose bad feelings made

this cap. Such people force me sometimes to wear it low upon my forehead.



Feeling better about it, Scrooge moved with the spirit right through the wall.

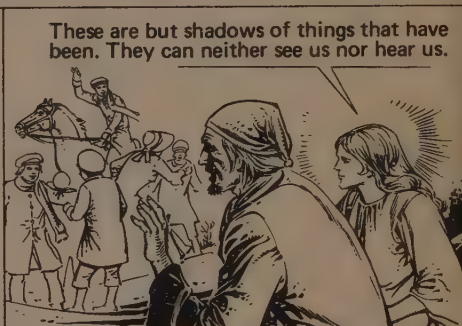


POCKET CLASSICS

They found themselves on an open country road. It was a clear, cold winter day with snow on the ground. Ahead of them lay a small market village.

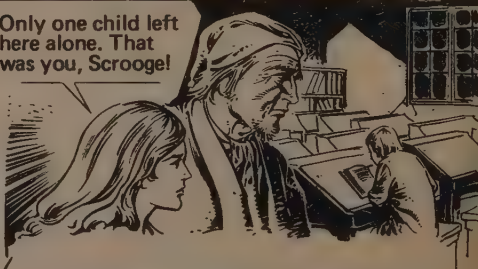


As they neared the town, they met schoolboys on their way home for the holidays. The two could tell because the air was filled with their Christmas greetings to each other. Several times Scrooge tried to call out to them.



They walked through the town and entered an old school building. Soon they found a dark, bare room full of empty desks. At one of these a lonely boy sat reading.

Only one child left here alone. That was you, Scrooge!



And Scrooge sat down at one of the desks and wept to see himself as he used to be.

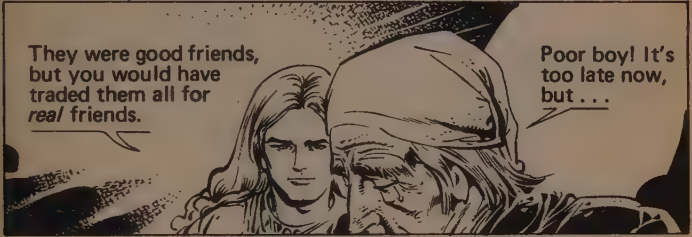
A Christmas Carol

The spirit went on to remind him how books had given him many happy hours. They had been his only friends.



They were good friends, but you would have traded them all for real friends.

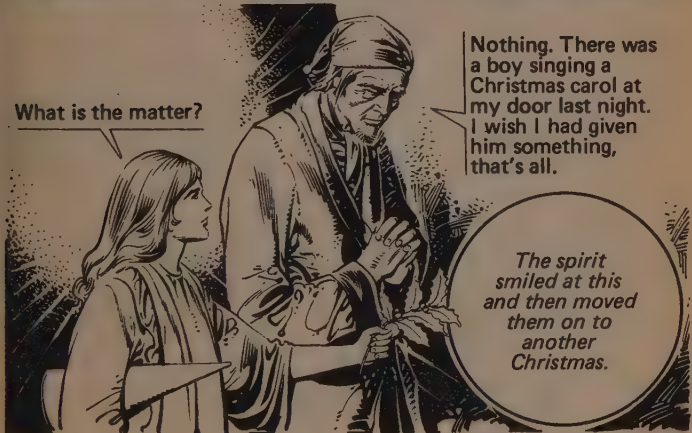
Poor boy! It's too late now, but . . .



What is the matter?

Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I wish I had given him something, that's all.

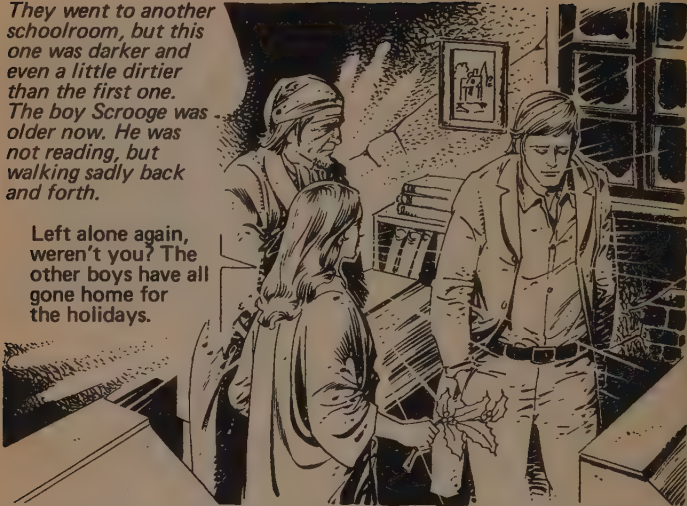
The spirit smiled at this and then moved them on to another Christmas.



POCKET CLASSICS

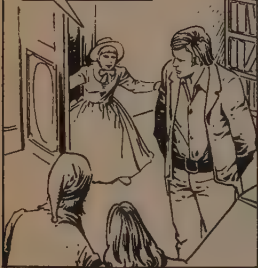
They went to another schoolroom, but this one was darker and even a little dirtier than the first one. The boy Scrooge was older now. He was not reading, but walking sadly back and forth.

Left alone again, weren't you? The other boys have all gone home for the holidays.



And then, as the boy Scrooge kept looking at the door, it opened softly. A little girl, much younger than he, came running in.

I have come to bring you home, dear brother!



Home, little Fan?



Yes . . . home for good!



Father spoke so gently to me one night that I was not afraid to ask him again if you might come home. And he said yes.

It was a happy meeting. Fan continued to tell her brother what their father had said.



He is so much kinder than he used to be. Home's like heaven now.

Young Scrooge could hardly believe her next words.

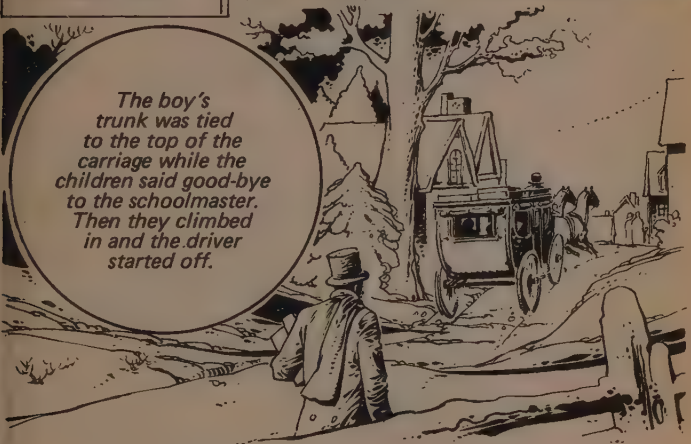


He says you're to be a man and are never to come back to this school!

And we're going to be together all this Christmas long! We'll have the best time in the world!

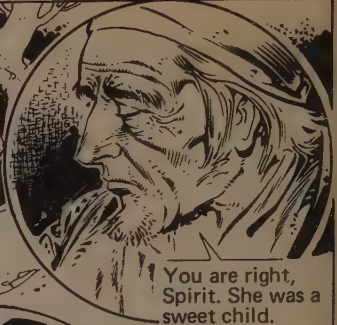


The boy's trunk was tied to the top of the carriage while the children said good-bye to the schoolmaster. Then they climbed in and the driver started off.



They drove down the schoolhouse road, brushing snow from the pine trees as they rode past on their happy holiday journey.

Your sister was always a quiet girl who could not stand being treated badly. She was good, too, wasn't she?



You are right, Spirit. She was a sweet child.

She had a son, didn't she, before she died?

Yes . . . my nephew Fred.

At this, another tear fell from Scrooge's eye.

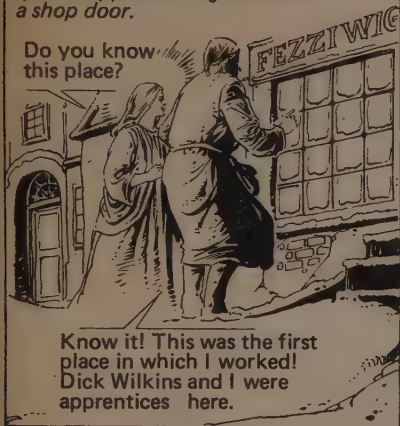
Then, although they had just left the school behind them, Scrooge and the spirit were back in the busy city. It was plain from the shop windows that it was Christmas time again.



Come. Another Christmas is before us!

It was evening and the street lamps had been lighted. The spirit stopped Scrooge before a shop door.

Do you know this place?



Know it! This was the first place in which I worked! Dick Wilkins and I were apprentices here.

As Scrooge and the spirit moved inside they saw an old gentleman. He was sitting on a high stool working at a desk.



Why, it's old Fezziwig!

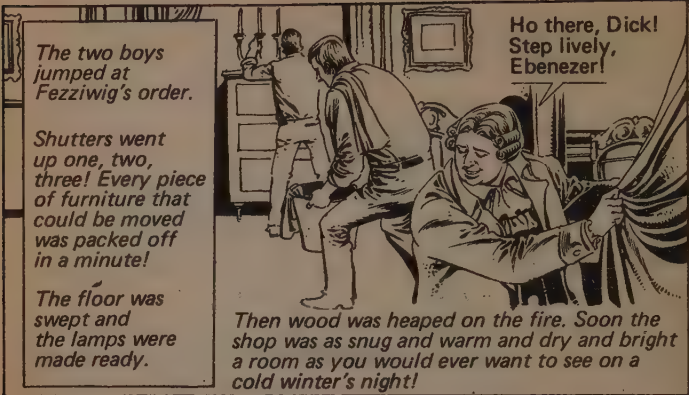
Then, as the clock struck seven, Fezziwig laid down his pen and called his two apprentices.



Yo ho, my boys! Ebenezer Scrooge and Dick Wilkins. No more work tonight, for it's Christmas Eve!

Up with the shutters! Clear the room! All must be ready!





Ho there, Dick!
Step lively,
Ebenezer!

*The two boys
jumped at
Fezziwig's order.*

*Shutters went
up one, two,
three! Every piece
of furniture that
could be moved
was packed off
in a minute!*

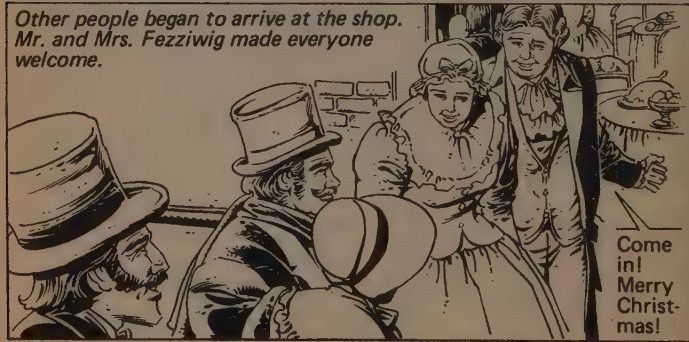
*The floor was
swept and
the lamps were
made ready.*

*Then wood was heaped on the fire. Soon the
shop was as snug and warm and dry and bright
a room as you would ever want to see on a
cold winter's night!*



*People came in to
spread a Christmas
feast upon tables
that had been set up
just for the party.*

Nothing could
be better
than this!



*Other people began to arrive at the shop.
Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig made everyone
welcome.*

Come
in!
Merry
Christ-
mas!

A Christmas Carol

*And in they all came, one after another.
Some came quickly, some boldly, some
pushing. But it was a happy place to be
that Christmas Eve.*



*Then in came a
fiddler and the
dancing started.*



*Away they all went,
twenty couples at
once, with Mr. and
Mrs Fezziwig leading
them.*



*They
did dances
old and new
as the night
flew by.*

And even had there been twice as many people, old Fezziwig and his wife would have been a match for them.

No two dancing partners could have moved the way they did.

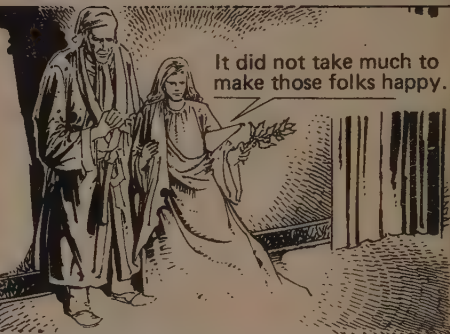
A wonderful party!

Thank you. We'll have an even better one next year!



All this time, Scrooge had acted like a different man, enjoying everything. When he and the spirit were left alone in the empty room, the light of that Christmas Past was still bright!

It did not take much to make those folks happy.



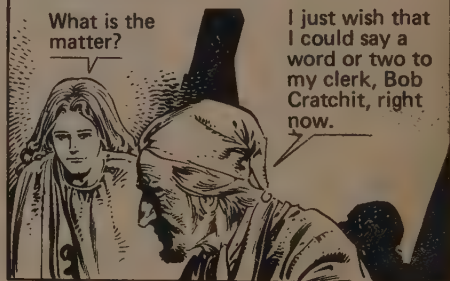
Scrooge's reply was surprising!

True. But he made us happy, and that was worth a fortune!

Then Scrooge felt the spirit's eyes upon him and stopped talking.

What is the matter?

I just wish that I could say a word or two to my clerk, Bob Cratchit, right now.



My time grows short! Quick!

The picture changed, and suddenly Scrooge saw himself as a young man talking to a lovely young lady.

In her eyes were tears which sparkled in the light of the Christmas Past.

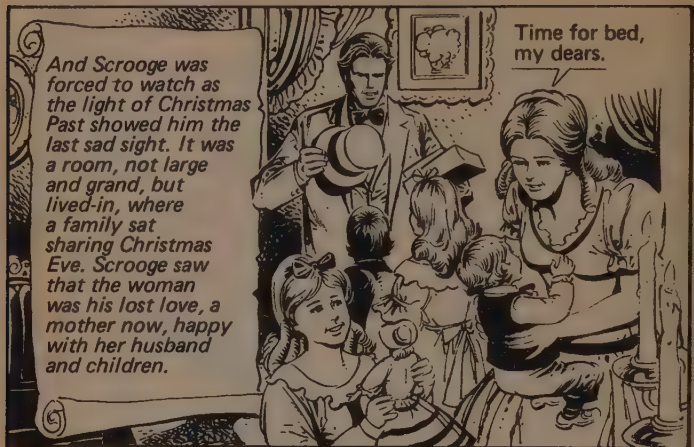
I cannot marry you. Another idol has taken my place in your heart.

What other idol?

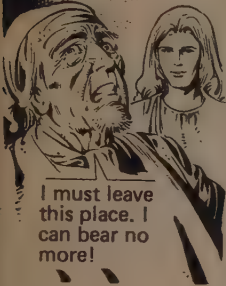
A golden one. Your love for me has changed into your love of money. Yet I will always love the person you used to be!

Show me no more!

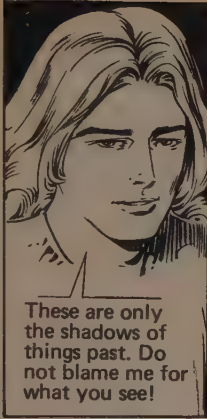
But I must! There is one picture left.



Almost in tears, Scrooge begged the spirit to take him home.



I must leave this place. I can bear no more!



These are only the shadows of things past. Do not blame me for what you see!

*Take me back!
Leave me alone!*



Upset by all he had seen, Scrooge began to fight with the spirit. He tried to pull its cap down over the light that showed him too much. But though the cap soon covered the spirit's whole form, the light kept shining across the floor.



All of a sudden Scrooge felt very tired. He found himself back in his own bedroom, so he fell into bed and sank into a heavy sleep.



Scrooge awoke when the clock struck one, knowing it was time for his second visitor. A strange light filled his room. He arose and went to the door to see if the light was coming from the next room.



At that moment a voice called him by name and told him to enter.

Scrooge obeyed, and what a sight met his eyes! It was his own room, but so changed he almost did not know it. The walls were hung with holly, mistletoe, and ivy. A fire was blazing in the fireplace and a Christmas feast had been set out.



**Come in! Come in!
You must get to
know me better! I
AM THE GHOST
OF CHRISTMAS
PRESENT! Look
upon me!**

*Upon Scrooge's
own couch sat a giant
holding a glowing torch.
Its light made the
room glow.*

A Christmas Carol

And Scrooge did just as he was told.

You have never seen the likes of me before?

Never!



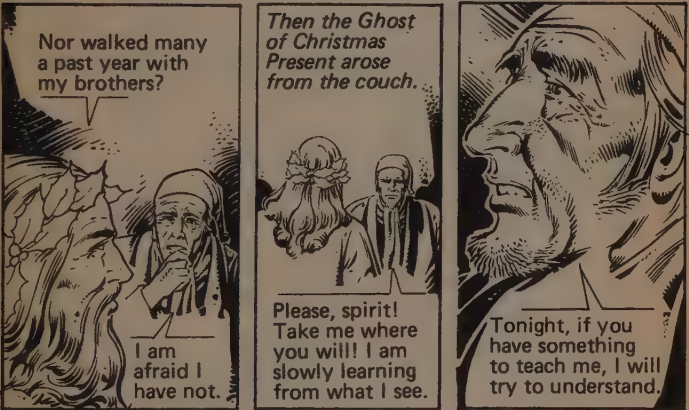
Nor walked many a past year with my brothers?

Then the Ghost of Christmas Present arose from the couch.

I am afraid I have not.

Please, spirit! Take me where you will! I am slowly learning from what I see.

Tonight, if you have something to teach me, I will try to understand.



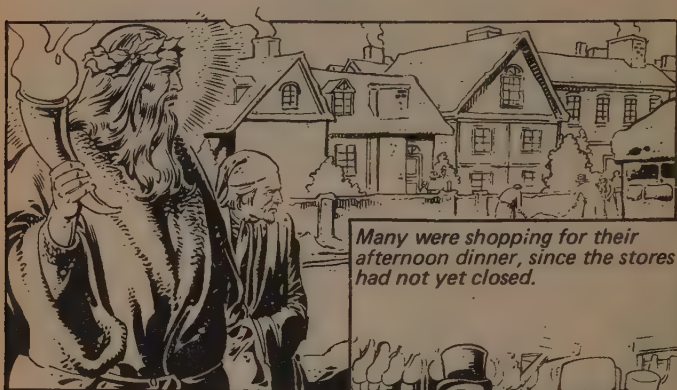
Touch my robe!

Scrooge reached out and held it fast.



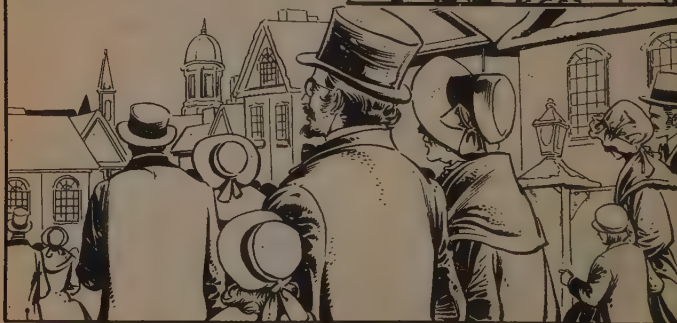
POCKET CLASSICS

At that moment the room was gone, and Scrooge found himself standing on the city streets. It was Christmas morning. Although the sky was gray, people passing by all seemed happy.



Many were shopping for their afternoon dinner, since the stores had not yet closed.

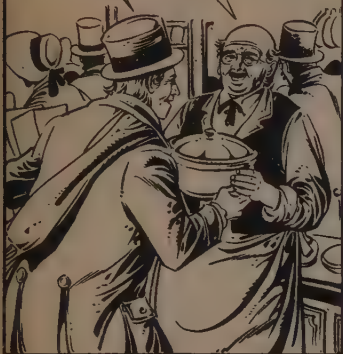
But soon the Christmas bells called them all to church. Away they came, crowding through the streets in their best clothes and their biggest smiles.



After church, the shops were busy again.

Is my roast chicken ready?

Done to a turn, sir. Still hot from the oven, too!



And many people, carrying their dinners home, had them blessed without ever knowing about it.



Is there a special flavor in the light that comes from your torch?



Yes, there is. My own.

Does it add to any kind of dinner on this day?



To any dinner kindly given . . . to a poor one most of all.

Why to a poor one most?



Because it needs my flavor most!

And, still speaking of the poor, the spirit led Scrooge to a small house in a poor part of London. He and Scrooge stood before the building.



Why, this is the home of my clerk, Bob Cratchit!

Before entering, the spirit waved his torch.



Bob has so little. Yet the ghost blesses this tiny house!

Inside they found Mrs. Cratchit, her daughter Belinda, and her son Peter. All were busy preparing Christmas dinner. Their clothes looked worn, but their smiles made them beautiful to see.



Soon two smaller Cratchit children came rushing in shouting with joy. They had just passed the baker's shop and were sure they had smelled their very own goose cooking.



I know it was ours!

It smelled so good!

A Christmas Carol

What is keeping your father and Tiny Tim? And where can Martha be?

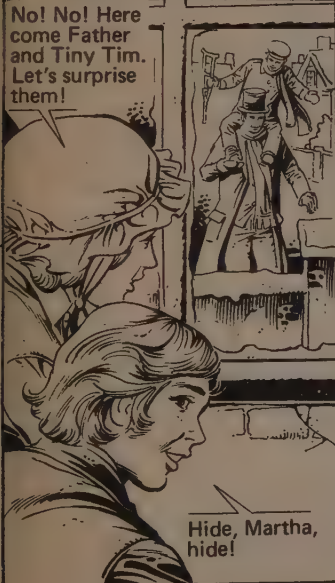


Here I am, Mother! We had much work to finish before I could get away.

Never mind, so long as you are here! Sit down in front of the fire and warm yourself.



No! No! Here come Father and Tiny Tim. Let's surprise them!

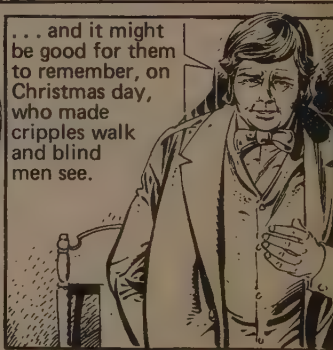
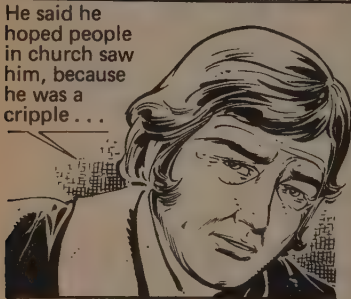
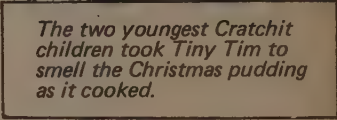


Hide, Martha, hide!

So Martha hid herself behind the door just as Bob and Tiny Tim came in.

Why, where's our Martha?





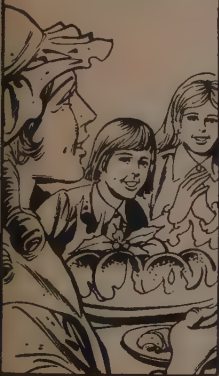
Here Bob's voice broke.

A Christmas Carol

But Christmas day would not be a sad one for the Cratchits. Their simple meal had been prepared with love, and everyone had something good to say. Bob Cratchit, for example, said he thought it was his wife's best meal since their wedding dinner. It was such a happy day for the Cratchit family!



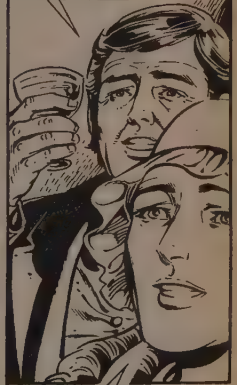
When the flaming pudding appeared at the end of the meal, everyone clapped, and Mrs. Cratchit beamed at her family.



At last dinner was done, and the family gathered around the fire-place for hot punch. Before they drank, Bob Cratchit offered a toast.



A merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!



God bless us!

Tiny Tim was the last to speak. He was sitting close to his father's side, upon his little stool. Bob Cratchit held Tim's hand in his own.

God bless us, every one!

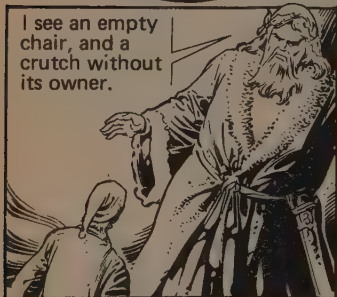


As he watched the happy family, Scrooge whispered something to the spirit.

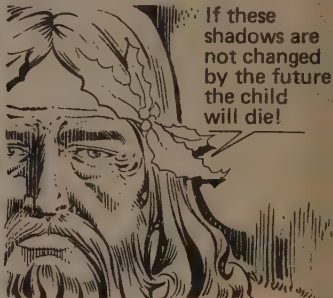
Tell me, spirit, will Tiny Tim live?



I see an empty chair, and a crutch without its owner.

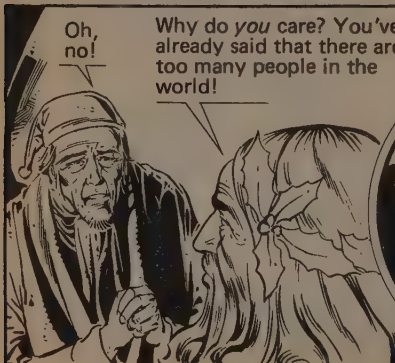


If these shadows are not changed by the future, the child will die!

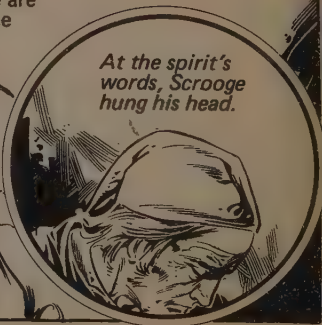


Oh, no!

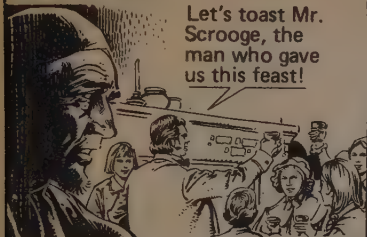
Why do *you* care? You've already said that there are too many people in the world!



At the spirit's words, Scrooge hung his head.



He raised it again, however, when he heard his name.



Let's toast Mr. Scrooge, the man who gave us this feast!

Gave us this feast indeed! I wish he were here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon!

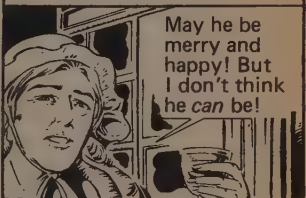


My dear! Think of the children. It is Christmas Day!



Only on Christmas Day could I drink to the health of such a hard man as Mr. Scrooge!

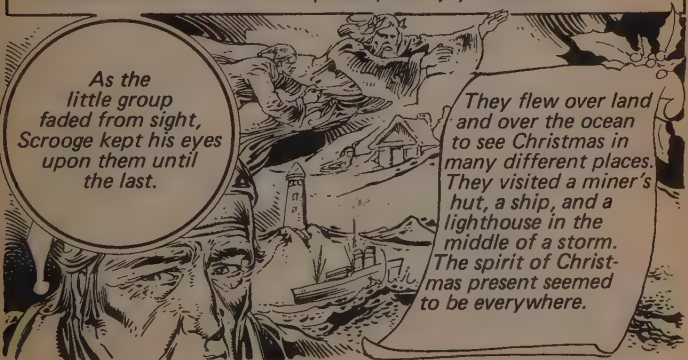
And so Mrs. Cratchit joined the others in the toast.



May he be merry and happy! But I don't think he can be!

The family made the toast, but there was little feeling for it. The name of Scrooge set a shadow over the party which lasted a full five minutes. But after it had passed, their joy returned.

As the little group faded from sight, Scrooge kept his eyes upon them until the last.



They flew over land and over the ocean to see Christmas in many different places. They visited a miner's hut, a ship, and a lighthouse in the middle of a storm. The spirit of Christmas present seemed to be everywhere.

Suddenly, as he moved with the spirit over a dark world with howling winds around him, Scrooge heard laughing.

He found himself standing with the spirit in the bright, warm home of his nephew. Fred and his wife were having a Christmas party, and many of their young friends were there.

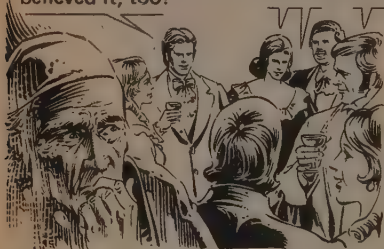


As Scrooge stood watching, he saw that Fred was telling a story and the young people were all laughing. The story was about him!

For the first time Scrooge saw Fred's beautiful wife. She was angry!

He said that Christmas was a humbug! And he believed it, too!

Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

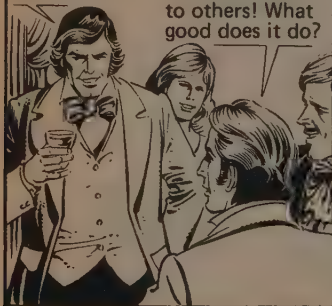


How could anyone say that, Fred?



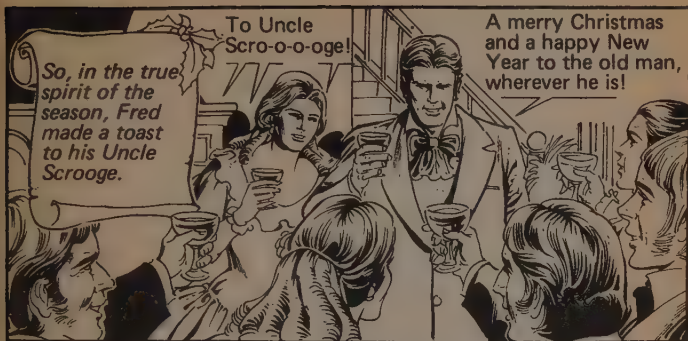
I hear he's rich.

His money is of no use to him or to others! What good does it do?



I asked him to come and have Christmas dinner with us, but he wouldn't do it. Just see the fun he misses! I feel sorry for him.





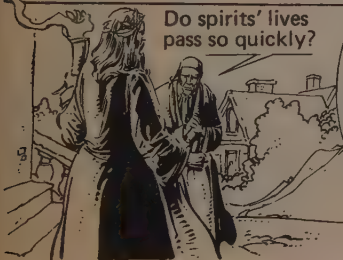
The happy group played games for the rest of the evening. Scrooge took part in everything, though no one else knew it!

When the spirit said that it was time to go, Scrooge begged like a child to stay until the end of the party.

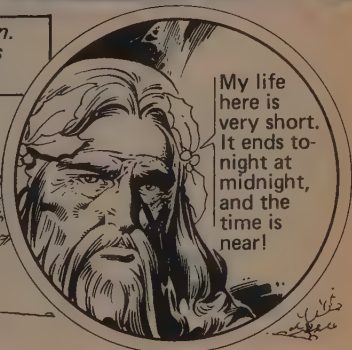


When it was over, they traveled on. Soon Scrooge saw that the spirit's hair had turned gray.

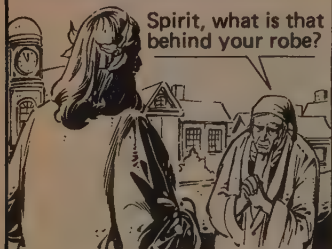
Do spirits' lives pass so quickly?



My life here is very short. It ends to-night at midnight, and the time is near!

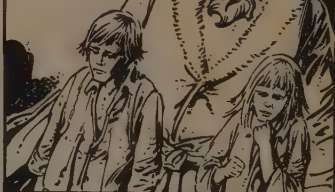


Then Scrooge saw that something seemed to be moving beneath the spirit's robe.

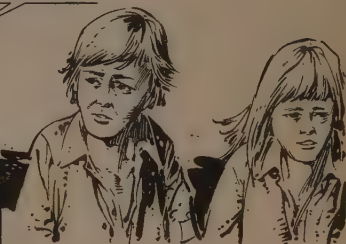


Spirit, what is that behind your robe?

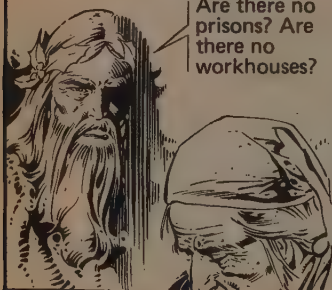
These are the children of the world. They are poor and ignorant.



Have they no home?
Is there no one to help them?



For the second time the spirit made Scrooge hang his head by repeating some of his very own words!



Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

Somewhere a clock struck twelve, and coming toward him was another spirit.



It was the ghost of Christmas yet to come!



The spirit wore a black robe which hid its head, face, and form. Nothing could be seen but his hand. Scrooge was terrified.

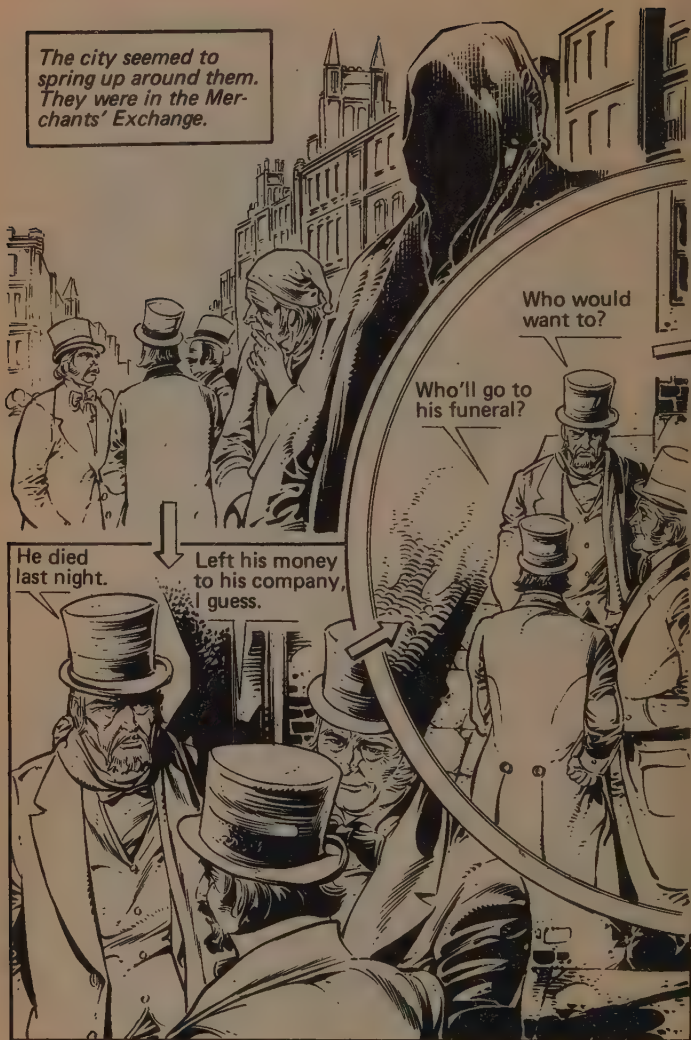
The spirit said not a word, but nodded its head and pointed with its finger.

Scrooge shook with fear as he talked.

You are about to show me things that have not yet happened but could happen in the future?

I hope to become another man from what I was, and I know that you want to do me good . . . so lead on!

*The city seemed to
spring up around them.
They were in the Mer-
chants' Exchange.*



Since what he was seeing would take place in the future, Scrooge began to look around for himself. But another man was in his old place!

He looked closely at all the faces he passed but could not find his own.

Perhaps I will have changed my ways by now. I am probably in some other place that does people more good!

Hmmmm.
That's strange!

With its finger still pointing, the spirit showed Scrooge a poor, run-down part of the city. Crime and evil were not strangers here!

What am I to learn from this?

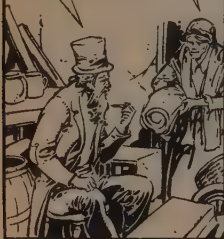
They followed a woman carrying a heavy bundle as she sneaked into a hidden shop.

POCKET CLASSICS

It was a store whose owner bought and sold stolen goods. And it was here that Meg came to sell the clothes she had stolen.

So you've been to his place, Meg?

Yes.



Scrooge and the spirit listened to what the two people were saying.

You took these with him lying there?

Yes— all of it!

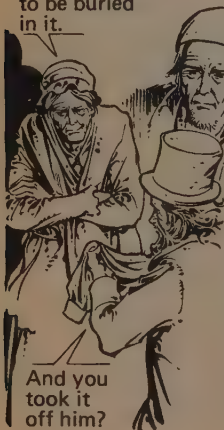


What are these?

His blankets. He won't catch cold without 'em, I guess!



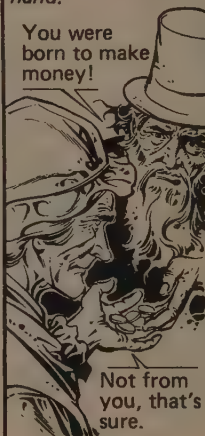
That fine shirt almost went to waste. He was to be buried in it.



And you took it off him?

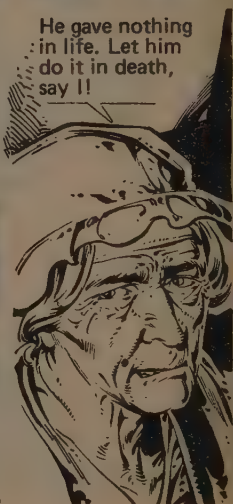
The man dropped some coins into her hand.

You were born to make money!



Not from you, that's sure.

He gave nothing in life. Let him do it in death, say I!



A Christmas Carol

Scrooge heard her next words in great fear.

He drove everyone away. I don't think there was a soul who liked him.

Will she never stop talking!

If so, someone would have been with him on Christmas Eve. Instead, he died there alone.

Scrooge shook from head to foot.

Spirit! The story of this man might be my own! My life has been like that.

The spirit did not answer, but Scrooge moved quickly to another room. It was very dark, but Scrooge knew where he was.

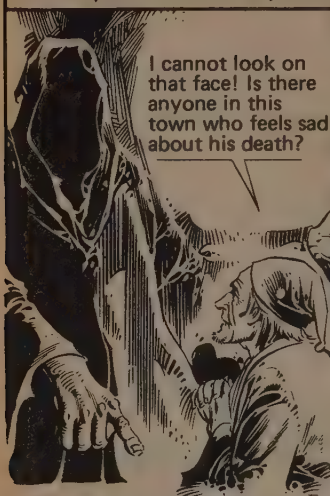
He looked back at the spirit and saw its finger pointing to a figure on the bed. The ghost seemed to be telling Scrooge to draw back the cover and see who was there!

At this point Scrooge felt he could stand no more.

Let us go from this fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not forget its lesson, I promise.

No, spirit, I cannot do it.

But the spirit continued to point.



I cannot look on that face! Is there anyone in this town who feels sad about his death?

The ghost's robe moved like a dark wing to show Scrooge a room by daylight. A man was speaking to his wife and children.



He's dead, Caroline.

But who will take over our debt?

It doesn't matter. No one could be as hard a man as he was!

Finally we are free of him!



Of all the people the spirit had shown Scrooge, none seemed sorry that the man had died. Some of them were even happy!

We may sleep with light hearts tonight, Caroline!



The ghost finally brought Scrooge into the home of Bob Cratchit.

"Let me see some sorrow at his death," said Scrooge, "or that dark room which we left just now will be forever in my mind."

Your father is late.



Finally Bob Cratchit came home.

How green a place his little grave is! Tim! My child!



Tears ran down the father's face.

None of us will ever forget Tiny Tim, will we?

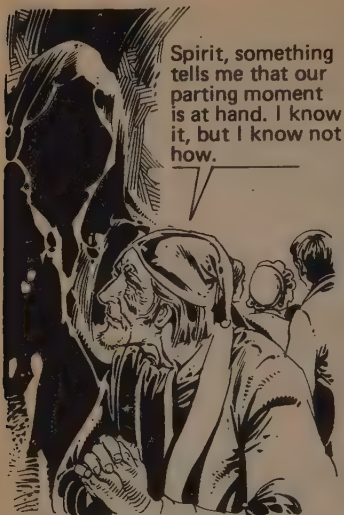
Never!



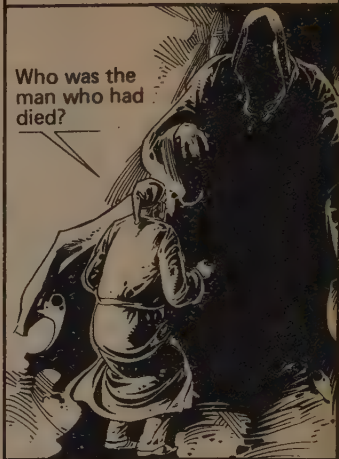
He walks slower these last few evenings, Mother.

He used to walk very fast with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder!



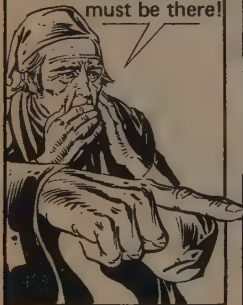


The question he hated to ask was on his lips.



But the spirit did not answer. As before, only the pointing finger showed Scrooge where they were going next.

There is my old office. My future self must be there!



But the spirit had stopped; his hand was pointing down another road.

My office is that way! Why do you point away from it?



Yet the spirit did not move.



By all that's holy, I'll see for myself!

Scrooge ran to the window of his office and looked in.



Inside he saw an office still, but it was not his! The man sitting at his desk was not Scrooge.

My office is the same, but someone else has taken my place.



Scrooge went back to the spirit and walked with him until they reached an iron gate. They entered an old graveyard at the side of a church.

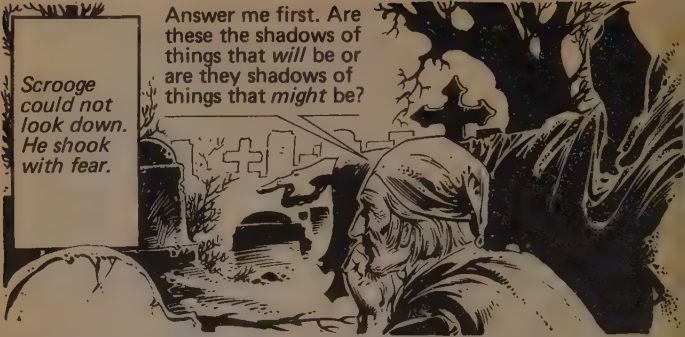


Walled in by houses and covered with weeds were the graves of those whom no one cared about. The spirit stood among them and pointed at one.

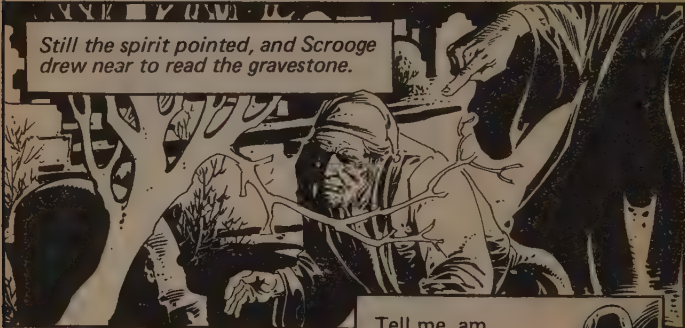


Scrooge could not look down. He shook with fear.

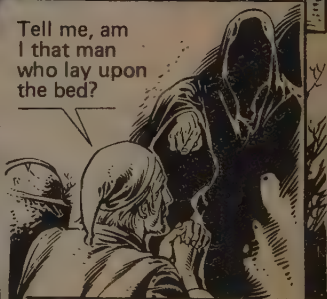
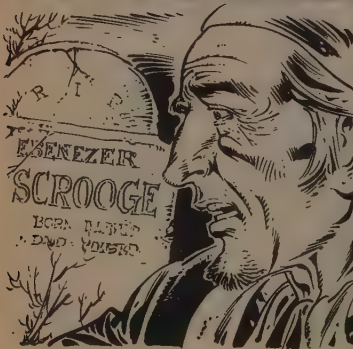
Answer me first. Are these the shadows of things that *will* be or are they shadows of things that *might* be?



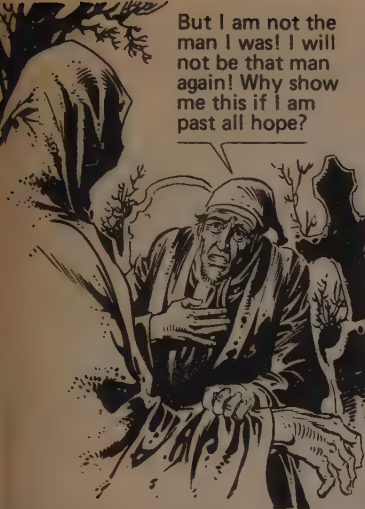
Still the spirit pointed, and Scrooge drew near to read the gravestone.



Tell me, am I that man who lay upon the bed?



The finger pointed from the grave to Scrooge and back again.



But I am not the man I was! I will not be that man again! Why show me this if I am past all hope?

For the first time the hand seemed to shake a bit.



Tell me, please, that I may change the shadows I have just seen. I want to live and become a better person!

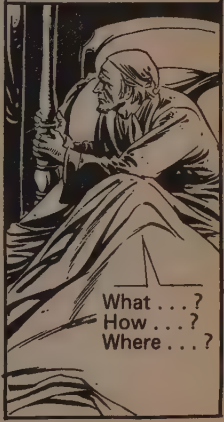
The kind hand shook again.

I will honor Christmas in my heart and keep it all the year! Please do not let those things happen!

As he prayed, the spirit began to slip away.

You must help me!
You must!

It grew smaller and smaller until it was no bigger than a bedpost.

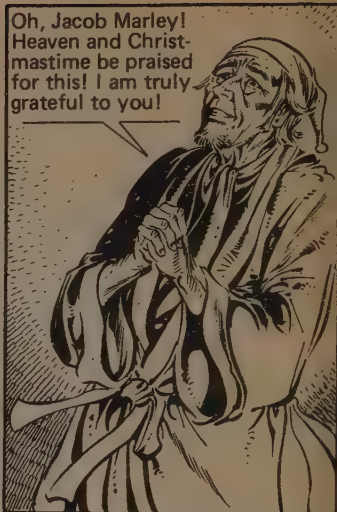


What ...?
How ...?
Where ...?

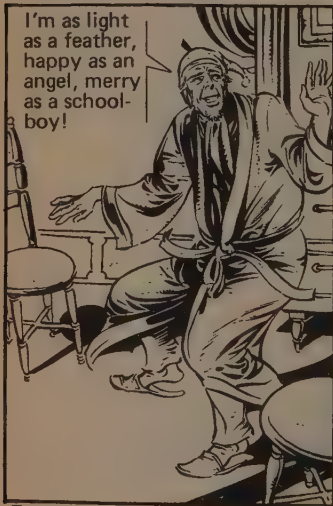
Everything was the same, but Scrooge somehow knew he had been saved. He would have the time to make many changes!



Oh, Jacob Marley!
Heaven and Christ-
mastime be praised
for this! I am truly
grateful to you!

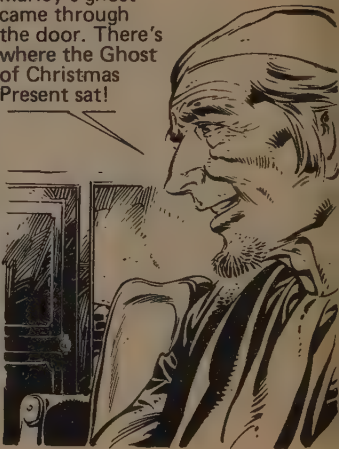


I'm as light
as a feather,
happy as an
angel, merry
as a school-
boy!



He ran into the sitting room.

Marley's ghost
came through
the door. There's
where the Ghost
of Christmas
Present sat!



It's all right, it's all true! It all happened!

And then Scrooge laughed a great loud laugh.

It was the father of a long, long line of great laughs!

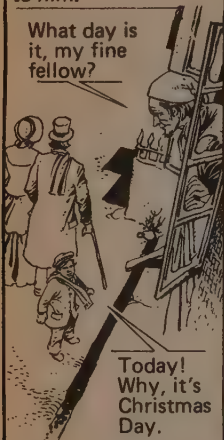
He flung up the window, and put out his head. Church bells were ringing.

I don't know what day it is! Or how long I was among the spirits! But who cares?

Oh, it's beautiful! Beautiful!

A passing boy looked up as Scrooge called to him.

What day is it, my fine fellow?



Today!
Why, it's
Christmas
Day.

Christmas! I haven't missed it. The spirits have done it all in one night.



Scrooge quickly began to plan.

Have they sold the prize turkey in the shop around the corner?



What, the one as big as me?



It's hanging there now.

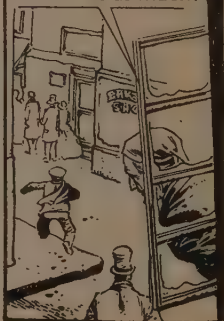


The very one!

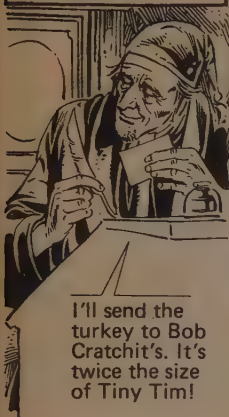
Go and buy it. Bring back the man with it, and I'll give you a shilling.

At the next promise, the boy was off like a shot.

Be back in less than five minutes, and I'll give you two times as much!



He had barely written out the address card when the door knocker clanged.

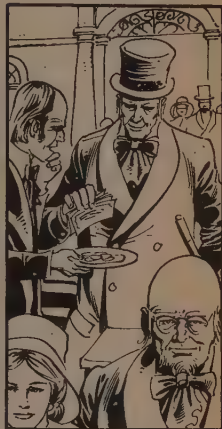


I'll send the turkey to Bob Cratchit's. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim!

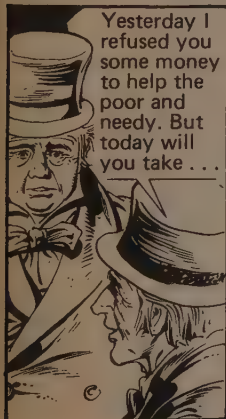
It's impossible to carry that big turkey to Camden Town! I'll get you a cab and pay for it too!



Now, dressed in his best clothes, Scrooge walked to church.



On the street again, he saw a man he thought he knew.



Yesterday I refused you some money to help the poor and needy. But today will you take . . .

Such an amount! My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you sure of this?



I am.

Not a cent less! A great many back payments have to be made.



I shall call at your office tomorrow, then.

Next Scrooge hurried to the house of his nephew, Fred. He didn't want to be late for Christmas dinner. Fred and his wife greeted him with surprise.

Uncle! You *did* come for Christmas dinner after all!

Uncle Scrooge, It's so nice to meet you.

Bless you both, my dears!

And Scrooge was the life of the party.

The next morning Scrooge arrived early at his office. And, just as he thought, Bob Cratchit was a few minutes late.

I'm sorry to be late, sir. I'll never let it happen again!

Then Scrooge spoke up. And as Bob listened, he could hardly believe his ears.

I have had quite enough of this! And so . . . I am about to raise your salary!

We'll talk this over right now with a cup of holiday punch. I am happy with the good work you've done for me over the years. Now I want to help you and your family.

Scrooge was even better than his word. He did it all, and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a man as the good old city ever knew!

And from that time on, it was always said that if anyone knew how to keep Christmas well, it was Ebenezer Scrooge! May that be truly said of all of us!

And so, as Tiny Tim once said, God bless us, every one!

*the
End*

COMPLETE LIST OF POCKET CLASSICS AVAILABLE

CLASSICS

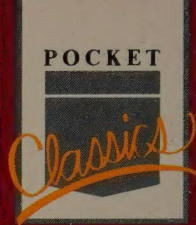
- C 1 Black Beauty
- C 2 The Call of the Wild
- C 3 Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
- C 4 Dracula
- C 5 Frankenstein
- C 6 Huckleberry Finn
- C 7 Moby Dick
- C 8 The Red Badge of Courage
- C 9 The Time Machine
- C10 Tom Sawyer
- C11 Treasure Island
- C12 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea
- C13 The Great Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
- C14 Gulliver's Travels
- C15 The Hunchback of Notre Dame
- C16 The Invisible Man
- C17 Journey to the Center of the Earth
- C18 Kidnapped
- C19 The Mysterious Island
- C20 The Scarlet Letter
- C21 The Story of My Life
- C22 A Tale of Two Cities
- C23 The Three Musketeers
- C24 The War of the Worlds
- C25 Around the World in Eighty Days
- C26 Captains Courageous
- C27 A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court
- C28 The Hound of the Baskervilles
- C29 The House of the Seven Gables
- C30 Jane Eyre
- C31 The Last of the Mohicans
- C32 The Best of O. Henry
- C33 The Best of Poe
- C34 Two Years Before the Mast
- C35 White Fang
- C36 Wuthering Heights
- C37 Ben Hur
- C38 A Christmas Carol
- C39 The Food of the Gods
- C40 Ivanhoe
- C41 The Man in the Iron Mask
- C42 The Prince and the Pauper
- C43 The Prisoner of Zenda
- C44 The Return of the Native
- C45 Robinson Crusoe
- C46 The Scarlet Pimpernel

COMPLETE LIST OF POCKET CLASSICS AVAILABLE (cont'd)

- C47 The Sea Wolf
- C48 The Swiss Family Robinson
- C49 Billy Budd
- C50 Crime and Punishment
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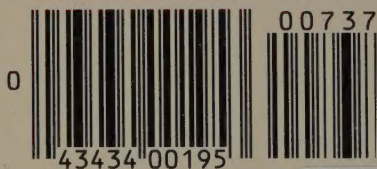
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